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Human Rights Council
Twenty-seventh session
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council

27/5
The safety of journalists

The Human Rights Council,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recalling relevant international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 8 June 1977,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 68/163 of 18 December 2013 on the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, and Security Council resolution 1738 (2006) of 23 December 2006 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict,

Recalling also Human Rights Council resolution 21/12 of 27 September 2012 on the safety of journalists, Council decision 24/116 of 26 September 2013 on a panel discussion on the safety of journalists, and all other relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights and the Council, in particular Council resolution 12/16 of 2 October 2009 and all other resolutions on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Council resolution 13/24 of 26 March 2010, on the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflict, and Council resolution 26/13 of 26 June 2014, on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet,

Mindful that the right to freedom of opinion and expression is a human right guaranteed to all in accordance with articles 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and that it constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and development,

Recalling all relevant reports of the special procedures of the Human Rights Council with regard to the safety of journalists, in particular the reports of the Special Rapporteur on

the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, presented to the Council at its twentieth session,[1] and the interactive dialogue thereon,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on good practices on the safety of journalists, submitted to the Human Rights Council at its twenty-fourth session,[2]

Welcoming the panel discussion of the Human Rights Council on the issue of the safety of journalists, held on 11 June 2014, and taking note with appreciation of the summary report of the Office of the High Commissioner thereon, submitted to the Council at its twenty-seventh session,[3]

Welcoming also the important work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the safety of journalists,

Noting with appreciation the international conference on the safety of journalists, held in Warsaw on 23 and 24 April 2013, and its specific recommendations,

Recognizing that the work of journalists often puts them at specific risk of intimidation, harassment and violence,

Deeply concerned by all human rights violations and abuses committed in relation to the safety of journalists, including through killing, torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, expulsion, intimidation, harassment, threats and acts of other forms of violence,

Expressing serious concern at the recent attacks and violence against journalists and media workers, in particular in situations of armed conflict, and recalling in this regard that journalists and media workers engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered civilians and shall be protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians,

Acknowledging the specific risks faced by women journalists in the exercise of their work, and underlining in this context the importance of taking a gender-sensitive approach when considering measures to address the safety of journalists,

Acknowledging also the particular vulnerability of journalists to becoming targets of unlawful or arbitrary surveillance and/or interception of communications, in violation of their rights to privacy and to freedom of expression,

Bearing in mind that impunity for attacks and violence against journalists constitutes one of the main challenges to strengthening the protection of journalists, and emphasizing that ensuring accountability for crimes committed against journalists is a key element in preventing future attacks,

1. *Condemns unequivocally* all attacks and violence against journalists and media workers, such as torture, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention, and intimidation and harassment in both conflict and non-conflict situations;

2. *Strongly condemns* the prevailing impunity for attacks and violence against journalists, and expresses grave concern that the vast majority of these crimes go unpunished, which in turn contributes to the recurrence of these crimes;

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[1] A/HRC/20/17 and A/HRC/20/22.
[2] A/HRC/24/23.
[3] A/HRC/27/35.

3. *Urges* States to promote a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference, to prevent attacks and violence against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy, thorough, independent and effective investigations into all alleged violence against journalists and media workers falling within their jurisdiction, to bring perpetrators including, inter alia, those who command, conspire to commit, aid and abet or cover up such crimes, to justice, and to ensure that victims and their families have access to appropriate remedies;

4. *Takes note* of the good practices of different countries aimed at the protection of journalists, as well as, inter alia, those designed for the protection of human rights defenders that can, where applicable, be relevant to the protection of journalists;

5. *Calls upon* States to develop and implement strategies for combating impunity for attacks and violence against journalists, including by using, where appropriate, good practices such as those identified during the panel discussion held on 11 June 2014 and/or compiled in the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on good practices on the safety of journalists, inter alia:

(*a*) The creation of special investigative units or independent commissions;

(*b*) The appointment of a specialized prosecutor;

(*c*) The adoption of specific protocols and methods of investigation and prosecution;

(*d*) The training of prosecutors and the judiciary regarding the safety of journalists;

(*e*) The establishment of information-gathering mechanisms, such as databases, to permit the gathering of verified information about threats and attacks against journalists;

(*f*) The establishment of an early warning and rapid response mechanism to give journalists, when threatened, immediate access to the authorities and protective measures;

6. *Emphasizes* the important role that media organizations can play in providing adequate safety, risk awareness, digital security and self-protection training and guidance to employees, together with protective equipment, where necessary;

7. *Welcomes* the proclamation by the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/163, of 2 November as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists;

8. *Stresses* the need to ensure better cooperation and coordination at the international level, including through technical assistance and capacity-building, with regard to ensuring the safety of journalists, including with regional organizations, and invites United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, other international and regional organizations, Member States and all relevant stakeholders, when applicable and in the scope of their mandates, to cooperate further in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, and to this end also calls upon States to cooperate with relevant United Nations entities, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as international and regional human rights mechanisms, and to share information on a voluntary basis on the status of investigations into attacks and violence against journalists;

9. *Acknowledges* the importance of addressing the issue of the safety of journalists through the process of the universal periodic review;

10. *Encourages* national, subregional, regional and international human rights mechanisms and bodies, including the relevant special procedures of the Human Rights

Council, treaty bodies and national human rights institutions, in the framework of their mandates, to continue to address the relevant aspects of the safety of journalists in their work;

11. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the safety of journalists in accordance with its programme of work, no later than at its thirty-third session.

39th meeting
25 September 2014

[Adopted without a vote.]